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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the use of Web-based instruction in social studies methods. The paper examines how Web-based instruction can transform teaching and learning and explores the problems and possibilities involved with electronic classrooms, including Web-supported instruction. Based upon an earlier study involving online instruction, that Web-based instruction (comprehensive online instruction) and Web-supported instruction (teacher meets class but instruction is supported by the Web) can be transformative enterprises meeting the high expectations of teaching and learning for the instructor and student. The James Madison University (JMU) in Virginia served as a case study for examining Web-based instruction for social studies methods courses. It describes the University and explains how this particular type of instruction is used in different courses. The paper concludes that the possibilities of Web-supported instruction in social studies methods classes are infinite, but cautions that significant problems are to be encountered for a smooth electronic experience between teacher and student. (Contains 24 references.) (BT)

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Problems and Possibilities of Web-Based Instruction: Transforming Social Studies Methods and Practice.

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Problems and Possibilities of Web-based Instruction: Transforming Social Studies Methods and Practice

Now that the euphoria over the promise of technology has somewhat abated and we, as educators, have come to accept technology as another "tool" of the classroom, it is time for us to examine exactly what advances or transformations we have experienced in terms of teaching and learning as a result of technology. However, the term technology is multi-dimensional. Technology can mean anything from an overhead projector to web-based instructional delivery systems and we must go further than simply embracing any and all technology. In this paper, the authors seek to focus on the use of web-based instruction in social studies methods. We examine in what way/s web-based instruction transforms both teaching and learning and explore the problems and possibilities involved with electronic classrooms, including web-supported instruction. From the outset, we believed, based upon an earlier study involving online instruction, that web-based instruction (totally online instruction) and web-supported instruction (teacher meets class but instruction is supported by the web) can truly be transformative enterprises which meet, in terms of teaching and learning, the high expectations of both instructor and student.

Background to study:

Chickering and Gamson's (1987) seminal work on the principles of good teaching practice has influenced web-based delivery systems, such as Web CT, in the design and philosophy of programs. After all, good teaching practice is good teaching practice whether the classroom is a physical one or electronic, a sentiment shared by officials of the National

Education Association (NEA), an agency in the process of researching online learning and developing a set of evaluative criteria (NEA, 2001, 3). The seven principles of good teaching practice outlined by Chickering and Gamson (1987) include the following: 1) encourages contacts between students and faculty; 2) encourages cooperation among students; 3) encourages active learning; 4) gives prompt feedback; 5) emphasizes time on task; 6) communicates high expectations; and, 7) respects diverse talents and ways of learning. One art instructor provided immediate feedback, principle #4, both via the web and through the use of a "critique room," where she scans in student drawings so that the class may critique. She also uses graphics software in order to "correct" the student's drawing (Baxter, 2001, 14-15). Students can immediately see what problems they encountered.

In the implementation of all of these principles, Chickering and Ehrmann (2001, www.aahe.org/technology/) claim that technology or faculty alone cannot transform learning in an electronic environment. Students must take action regarding their own learning and create opportunities to "search out additional resources or complementary experiences, establish their own study groups, or go to the professor for more substantial activities and feed back" (Chickering and Ehrmann, 2001). Heretofore, the emphasis on successful online teaching has resided with the creator of the course and not with course participants. Chickering and Ehrmann's emphasis on student responsibility is an added dimension to the growing body of literature on cyber classrooms, albeit, their work addresses the physical classroom as well.

One recent report on the "Pedagogy of Online Teaching and Learning," by the faculty at the University of Illinois, supported a broad scope approach to online instruction, yet at the same time pointed out the importance of emotional interaction between teacher and student and

students themselves. The absence of this emotional component in online courses is seen by some as problematic especially in terms of undergraduate education (Teaching at an Internet Distance, 2001, www.vpaa.uillinois.edu/tid/report.htm.). The social dimension of undergraduate education is important. One college president spoke to this issue when he stated that "college is as much about learning to live as it is about learning from books....," and that "the transformation is remarkable and is as much the product of the general intellectual and social experience on campus as the result of what goes on formally in the classroom. For these students, late-night discussions are much of what college is about, and the role of the football team is truly important. It is hard to imagine distance education, however effective, being truly equivalent" (Teaching at an Internet Distance; Hamm, 2000, EB104-6). The theme "there is no substitute for real classroom interaction," is a common one. Yet, as one "home study" professional pointed out, (Pena, 2001, 76) "when I was in school, you missed a couple of sentences of a professor's lecture and it was gone. Here, (online) you can review the lecture as many times as you want."

Electronic classrooms or even web-supported classrooms can not only be equivalent in terms of effectiveness, they have the potential to transform the way in which learners understand the course material and also provide a social component that is often missed in the traditional classroom–the willingness of shy or introverted students to participate in classroom discussion. Students also have far more time to respond to discussion questions when they are on the web than they do when they are face to face in a time-designated classroom. The ability of the electronic classroom to deliver instruction in a 24/7 format means that learning is not longer confined to exact periods (Schrum, 2000, 43). Students can access courses whenever they have a question or can interact with classmates whenever THEY choose. For the purpose of this paper,

the authors present a case study based upon two social studies methods classrooms at two universities. Both courses were web supported and allowed students unlimited access to all discussion boards as well as peer groups at two very different campuses. The normal twists and turns experienced in a face-to-face class also occur in an online environment.

Despite the "twists and turns" inherent in online or online assisted classes, what computer assisted learning provides is the ability to "independently store data collected through interaction with the student, thus providing the possibility for following student moves as a source of data and later providing feedback to them." The instructional benefits include, 1) learner interaction with concepts can be stored and retrieved for later analysis, and 2) the immediate feedback the learner receives allows a greater degree of learner control by providing individualized opportunities for review (Hargis, 2001, 475-76; see Galagan, 2000, 24-31, for a discussion on learning; and Hicks, 2000, 75). These web interactions and the ability of the teacher to retrieve and later analyze them and then return to the student with questions or statements is invaluable to the learning process. Often teachable moments go untaught or certainly never revisited, yet through this storage capacity, remarks made by students on line are preserved and can be used to extend learning. Not surprising, Bill Gates remarked that the school of the future will not be one that relies on paper and pencil, but rather on collaboration and web-based curriculum (Robbins, 2001, 70). Even the way we assess the achievement of students is changing owing to web-enhanced or online instruction. Today's assessment tools include production rather than paper and pencil tests that seek to measure students' cognitive understanding (Carnevale, 2001, A43-6). But one researcher points out that we must move with caution and not simply embrace technology for technology's sake (Leydon, 2001, 62-3).

Any effective learning strategy should bridge the gap between what we know about student learning and what we must do as teachers. Like the seven principles outlined by Chickering and Gamson, we can point to five common characteristics of effective learning strategy for online learning: 1) Openness in the Education Process-choice and negotiation within the course, self-and peer-assessment, and tutor-learner relationships. This process should seek to engage learners fully as both participants and contributors to the learning process; 2) Learning to learn-student construction of knowledge. Self-awareness of the knowledge construction process is the ultimate goal. Promoting and developing the higher order cognitive skills of articulation, reflection, analysis, synthesis, problem-solving and evaluation support the development of these skills and should provide a focus for the design of learning activities; 3) Prior knowledge and experience-Existing knowledge and personal conceptions are the starting point for discussion, clarification and planning of learning; 4) Problem/action-based learning-Use problems as the stimulus and focus for student activity; and, 5) A sense of community-Provide learning activities that encourage co-operation between group members as a means of creating a sense of community and promotion learning as a social process (McDonald, 2001, 20-3).

This last characteristic, sense of community, was the common rationale that underscored this project. While the instructors expected students to experience a high rate of anxiety owing to the two electronic platforms, both were well-trained in their respective software and believed that their experience in designing and implementing online courses or components would help to ameliorate student anxiety (see Short, 2000, 28-33, for a discussion of Online Learning faculty preparedness). This case study will cover such elements as how instructors envisioned their joint effort, how students understood the purpose of the project, the ease or lack of ease accessing and

utilizing the two online environments, and the extent to which this experiment increased knowledge of subject area, confidence with electronic-based instruction, and cultivation of a collaborative spirit.

Case Study:

James Madison University (JMU) is a traditional state college campus. Set in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley, JMU is located in the small city of Harrisonburg surrounded by mountains with rural farms and ski areas sprinkled around the valley. Students tend to be traditional age 18-22, overwhelmingly white, middle to upper middle class, and Christian. Most JMU courses have a fairly even distribution of population across Virginia with only about one third of the total campus population of 15,000 coming from this Northern Virginia and neighboring states. But, the majority of the secondary social studies methods students are from either Northern Virginia or the Greater New York metropolitan area, i.e. New Jersey, Connecticut, and suburbs of New York City. While our teacher education programs do attract some post-baccalaureate and re-entry students, of 22 secondary social studies methods students this semester (in two course sections), one student is African-American and two students are non-traditional age. This is a fairly normal distribution for this course across the 4 years I have been at the university. Unlike our Foundations courses, which are overwhelmingly female, the secondary social studies pre-service teachers are approximately two thirds male and one third female. Thus, for this author, one motivation behind our joint project was to reach beyond the simple integration of web-based instruction by trying to incorporate a mechanism for increasing diversity among the student population. AUM offered that diversity in several ways; an urban rather than rural campus, more non-traditional aged students and more minority students.

The courseware package provided to JMU faculty and students is BlackBoard©. The courseware is relatively easy to use and is being widely introduced on campus. For example, all teacher education faculty will be required to have course syllabi electronically posted using BlackBoard© by Spring 2002. The faculty training for the courseware is completed in less than one day. Students receive on-line tutorial or help from their instructors in learning to use the courseware. Very few faculty are teaching courses completely on-line, especially at the undergraduate level, but many faculty, including myself, have been using web-based instruction integrated into their courses for several years.

In the case of secondary social studies methods (SEED 371H), the pre-service teachers are using the courseware to engage in on-line discussion of assigned readings; to upload journals and components of the teaching units they are creating into individual group pages; to access course documents and information; to communicate with both classmates across course sections and the instructor; and to access hyperlinks that will provide them with valuable social studies resources. The addition of the AUM students as a third course section, enables the JMU students to have virtual classmates who are more diverse than the JMU student population. Further, the AUM course instructor was introduced to the JMU students as a course professor from whom they could gain additional expertise and guidance.

The introduction of AUM's courseware, WebCT©, added difficulty due to the more sophisticated level of the technology. Additionally, the AUM instructor was notified that several Language Arts and Fine Arts majors would be added to the Social Studies class owing to internal problems. The instructors decided to use both courseware packages for several reasons. First, each university provides courseware that the students at that university should be familiar with

across several of their courses. Thus, for the students, it was important for them to have some level of continuity. Second, one author became aware that pre-service teachers are not as adept at transferring technology skills as might be desirable. Thus, a course format that required students to understand the functions of the courseware and identify similar functions in other courseware became a teaching objective. Students now understand that "forums" in BlackBoard© and "Bulletins" in WebCt© serve a similar function. Theoretically, a comfort with multiple courseware packages will assist these pre-service teachers in adapting quickly to whatever software their future school districts provide.

Auburn University at Montgomery is a commuter campus located 10 miles to the east of the capital city. The average age of an AUM student is 28 with an enrollment of 5,000. The School of Education is one of the largest schools in the University and we share programs with Auburn University at Auburn. For example, the Alternative Masters Program is only on the Montgomery campus, while other educational programs are only on Auburn's main campus. Some students at AUM drive two hours or more to attend classes as Alabama is still largely rural with three or four major cities scattered some two hours or more apart. While the residential halls are limited on the Montgomery campus, the University has recently broken ground for a new high rise dormitory. The racial makeup of AUM is about 30-35 % African American with several hundred international students who train and play sports for the University. AUM is ranked #1 in several sports including women's tennis, soccer, and women's basketball. The sports program brings in students from South Africa, Australia, Sweden, countries in Latin America, Germany and Holland.

In reference to Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles for good teaching, the joint AUM/JMU methods course format (1) encourages contacts between students and faculty by using both the threaded discussion and the e-mail areas to enhance communication; (2) Cooperation among students has been increased by pairing students for unit topics across the three sections of the course. Every student has a partner in at least on other section. (3) Active learning has been encouraged through threaded discussion of assigned readings. Each student must post an initial response to the assigned article and then must reply to at least two other students from different course sections than their own. (4) Students receive prompt feedback using the e-mail function of the courseware. After the uploaded assignments are downloaded and read by the instructors, e-mailed responses are sent. Often students are fortunate enough to have responses from both instructors! (5) The use of threaded discussion has increased time on task. Often to the chagrin of students who now find they must actually complete the assigned readings as they must respond in the appropriate discussion forums. When instructors monitor threaded discussion in a timely manner, students must stay on top of their assigned work. (6) High expectations relate particularly to the expected quality of the instructional units these pre-service teachers are preparing. Now that they are working with partners, the instructors' expectations are even higher as the assumption is that collaboration will enhance the quality of the completed project. (7) In relation to respect of diverse talent and ways of learning, one of the unanticipated benefits of this collaboration is the presence of Language Arts and Art methods students in the AUM course. This has provided several of the JMU students with an opportunity to collaborate with a different academic discipline in the creation of either and interdisciplinary or a cross disciplinary instructional unit.

Analysis of Student Data:

Students were first asked to post their interests on AUM's Web CT course Bulletin Board. The instructors imagined that students would post their areas or topics of interest and that these would be viewed by both AUM and JMU students. Our students would then seek out partners at the other institution based upon interests. As it turned out we had to assist by pairing students with similar interests. What compounded the challenge of pairing was the addition to the AUM Social Studies Methods' course of Language Arts and Fine Arts students. The students in those curriculum areas could not imagine how they would be able to work with Social Studies students on a unit of instruction. Additionally, at AUM, students were enrolled as both graduate and undergraduate. Despite the obvious challenges, as course instructors, we assured them that we would constantly monitor the progress of the groups and intervene when necessary. Likely, prior negative experiences with grouping projects accounts for some of their apprehension.

As students posted their areas of interests, we observed an almost cavalier attitude about the impending collaborative endeavor. Two JMU students wrote,

> All right folks...Here is the deal...Myself and M.S.–two really cool guys–are looking for someone down at AUM to work with us. We are doing propaganda throughout history!!! We are talking about an awesome topic: Paine's Commons[sic] Sense, WWI posters, WWII Rc ie the Riveter. Join us if you want to do the best lesson plans from JMU to AUM. Contact me as soon as possible, for I know this topic is pumping everybody up!

At this point in the semester, students could not appreciate the daunting task ahead of them as they would struggle to learn the art of creating a unit of instruction.

The initial posting seemed to connect those highly motivated students and even a few who were apprehensive. One AUM Language Arts student connected with a student at JMU and decided to construct a unit on medieval society. As the JMU student wrote, "I just wanted to

inform you that Rachel and I have agreed to work together. She will use English/Lit background for Beowulf and Sir Gawain/Green Knight, while I will attempt to explain feudalism and other pressing issues of the dark ages." Others offered the following, ...to be honest I don't know what to write here, but I will say that I HATE American History with a passion. I would much rather spend my time teaching European or Asian history;" I am in the second year of a master's program at JMU. I am interested in developing a unit on the Cold War;" "...I have a unit plan somewhat already worked out from other classes and wanted to know if you or any one else would be interested in doing a unit concerned with the first American civilizations;" and "My major is Secondary Language Arts and I am scared to death to be paired with a History student via computer. I do feel however, that this experience will benefit me in the future and as long as we can all work together, we will make it with flying colors."

Generally, the postings seemed to assist students at both campuses come together and agree on topics. However, well past the mid-term, a few students, in particular a Fine Arts major at AUM, still did not have a group or partner. This particular student insisted on constructing a unit on color theory and could not imagine how her material would "mesh" with a different subject area. She admitted that she intended to use artists' works such as Monet to demonstrate use of color at which point I, as her instructor, guided her in the direction of a group working on 19th century themes. Following the exercise where students posted their areas or topics of interest, the September 11th attacks held everyone spellbound as we attempted to deal with the tragedy in our two classrooms. In an effort to provide students with an opportunity to express how they had understood the events of September 11, we posted a statement on the JMU BlackBoard to which the students replied. These events riveted our students over the next few

weeks and compelled them to post numerous thoughts. The following are excerpts from their postings and replies:

K.K/JMU-As a social studies teacher in progress, I have been listening to a lot of people that have been calling these terrorists 'madmen.'I do think that you have to be a strange one to implement an attack such as this, but it is not so far from what the US has done to other countries. In our eyes our actions seem justifies, just as in this case, in t their eyes their actions seem justified. We felt that we needed to bomb Japan twice, as if once wasn't enough." Read 29 times.

JL/JMU-I know that what I am about to say will offend most, if not all, of you. Please keep in mind that we are all dealing with these past couple of days in a variety of different ways. With that said, I must admit that I feel everybody is taking this event so out of proportion. Yes, it is a horrible thing to have happened. Yes there was a huge loss of innocent life. Yes, there was a huge loss of innocent life. But that happens everyday! Deal with it! For the first time in many, many years, America has been attacked and taken serious losses. America, the big brother to all countries, has been sucker punched! And quite hard as a matter of fact. The two things this country stands for (capitalism and military strength) were taken out. Why does this surprise you? Many people around the world HATE US. It was a matter of time before something like this happened. And now everybody is in an uproar. Boo hoo! Americans die, so now it's a big deal. What about people that have been dying in Tibet, Yugoslavia, the Middle East, Africa, South America, and the list goes on. Yes, some people do care about them, but not as many who are concerned about this. Why is it now that everybody wants to kill Bin Ladin or whom ever did this? Why is it now that so many people want to get involved and help? Why is it now that people are willing to donate blood, when for the longest time we have been seriously short all across the country? I know why. Its because we only care about ourselves. And that is why other countries HATE US and would go to these lengths to prove it. Can you blame them? Read 24 times.

Reply to JL from RC/JMU-I think you placed your view into good context in your first lines when you said that everyone deals with tragedy differently. It may be easier to have your attitude from a distance, but to do so insults the legitimate feelings of every person who knows/fears one of their loved ones has died.

Your other points are well taken, of course many people in the world do not like us, we represent different ideas, and priorities than they do. On a larger scope, very often WE tread on the lives of people in other countries. But these things (i'll avoid calling them tragedies for your sake) don't happen ANYWHERE. When is the last time you heard of tens of thousands of people being killed in a small area because of an outside force. Of course there are terrible places to live in the world, where people die everyday of AIDS, famine and malaria, but a "Big Whoop" attitude helps no one.

Think of yourself as a history teacher, how could you teach your students about this event? You could definitely use the idea of "How the World Views America" as a jumping off point, but you owe it to your future students, those who lost family and friends, and your fellow students to look a little deeper than "boo hoo". Where would the study of history be if we said, "oh the Battle of Antietam, boo hoo?" Read 14 times.

MO/JMU-To begin, it's best to say that although I am not a religious man by any stretch of the imagination, I think our prayers ought to go out to any wounded still in the rubble, to those who have already perished, and to their families. Few things in this world can compare to the sights my roommates and I watched all day yesterday, trying to absorb as much of the flood of information as we could. America lost her innocence yesterday and our thin veil of Pax Americana lifted, revealing the true ugliness of the rest of the world. For those who would claim that the rest of the world suffers the same tragedies on any type of regular basis, I

fully disagree. It is extraordinarily rare that any terrorist attack, or full fledged international war for that matter, can claim so many lives in so short a time. In the space of an hour with estimates of up to 50,000 dead? Only an atomic bomb, with a direct hit and maximum blast, could have done as much, or more, damage in the same amount of time. Our nation's two tallest and the world's largest office buildings were hit, nearly simultaneously, with the additional deaths of those on board the planes, no one has ever even dreamed of something this terrible. I mentioned in my class about the resemblance of this attack to one imagined in Tom Clancy's fictional Executive Orders. As the day went on, I realized that even that fictional worst-case attack scenario would end with far fewer casualties than our reality. Read 6 times.

CH/AUM-I agree anger and vengeance is not the answer. One of the many commentators I have listened to over the past two days said that we must remember who we are as a people. Americans pride themselves on adhering to a higher standard and we must not allow the actions of terrorists to cause us to lose our ideals. I had friends working in the World Trade Center Towers and while I want very much to see the terrorists brought to justice, I think that it must be done in accordance with our laws and traditions and not theirs.

SB/AUM-Now, to take up for John, I do believe that America has been on a high horse for some time. I have heard many people in passing talking about how no one would ever be able to come into our country and take over or destroy us. Although I have no military background, I do have a Christian background. God loves all people even if they don't love him. America is full of people that do and do not love him. What makes our country any better than any one else's in God's eyes? He sees us all as the same whether we with our blown up ego want to admit it or not. He is not simply going to protect us because we have more money or because we are a free society--He is going to let whatever he wants to happen, happen. The only thing that we as a nation can do to help is pray- pray for God's will and leave the rest with him.

RW/JMU-I agree that missile defense is another incredible waste of money. Forgive me for being political in a time like this, but the right likes to spend money on military hardware and the left prefers to spend money on assisting people for better lives.

Instructor/AUM-As I read through the replies to my posting on the September 11th tragedy, I was struck by several items that concern me as a professor who prepares social studies teachers for our public classrooms. Without addressing any one student in particular, I hope that my words will be instructive to all. One, some of you who will teach history allow yourselves to be drawn into dualistic explanations rather than looking at levels or dimensions of understanding. For example, the "right" does not stand for building up the military while the "left" is portrayed as the humanitarians of the world. Any perspective taken to the extreme is dangerous. Remember, Plato advocated a strong military to defend the body politic and Chelsea Clinton did not attend one of Washington D.C.'s inner city schools. Promoting spending programs for the poor may be the right thing to do and it doesn't hurt the promoter at the polls either, but that doesn't mean that the promoter's child goes to school with the poor even if he or she resides within the school district of the poor. As for those of you who have tried to draw parallels between the United States' decision to drop the bomb on Japan during World War II and Tuesday's attack on America by foreign terrorists, I must question what you have learned in your history classes. You are not comparing apples with apples. When the people in Hawaii on that peaceful Sunday morning of December 7, 1941 looked up at the sky and saw airplanes bearing down on the ships in Pearl Harbor, they were looking at warplanes with the rising sun, the symbol of Japan, painted on the body of the plane, not their own commercial aircraft. While the attack itself was considered a "sneak attack," it was crystal clear that the Japanese government was the sponsor of this wartime aggression. The rules of modern warfare generally called upon warring powers to fight it out with armies, and armies, with the exception of mercenaries, are military instruments of nations. Tuesday's attack was perpetrated by individuals whose personal hatred for the United States is predicated on a distorted

> interpretation of Islamic belief. Listen to the words of Islamic Jurists, they have been explaining the teachings of the Koran all week. While the United States is or cannot be considered any more perfect than any other nation, the memories of some Americans have failed them. They do not seem to recall the rebuilding plans paid for the U.S. when Germany was nearly bankrupt following World War II. They also do not remember the Berlin Airlift where bombers and assorted planes landed 24/7--minutes apart in order to save the people of Berlin from starvation following the blockade by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Some do not seem to know that the U.S. has sponsored relief and medical programs all over the world. In return, the debts owed by foreign countries helped by the U.S. are often never repaid. Don't be too quick to indulge in self flagellation. Remember, the Barbarians sacked Rome--the greatest and most advanced technological empire at that time-while the people and leaders of Rome itself tore it apart from inside.

Our Alabama students seemed far more pre-occupied with how to integrate what had happened in New York City and the Pentagon and their religious beliefs. More than a few did not seem to be able to formulate an answer as to how they would deal with these events in a classroom. The Virginia students on the other hand seemed to gravitate around one or two strong personalities who persisted in "bashing" the United States without being able to separate the terrorist attacks from September 11th from our attack on Japan. They almost took a "tit-for-tat attitude." The whirlwind, however, only existed in cyberspace. While we hoped that this exchange of ideas and opinions in the electronic classroom would carry over into the physical classroom, that did not seem to be the case. Perhaps they shifted their mental burdens to the Internet and were ready to go "back to business as usual," or perhaps they did not know where to take their arguments after posting them on BlackBoard. In any event, students appeared content to leave the events of September 11th behind, which is something neither instructor was able to do.

Pitfalls and Positives:

From the JMU perspective, this experience has been educative. The first year this project was initiated (Fall 2000), the instructors were never really able to get the courses synchronized and therefore even the threaded discussion was never really integrated the way the instructors had intended. To remedy that, during the summer of 2001, the instructors spent more time matching

the syllabi readings and assignments for the courses. One problem has been that the JMU classes meet on Tuesday/Thursday a.m. and the AUM students meet on Wednesday evening. Also, on both campuses, servers are being upgraded and there have been "downtimes" when students were unable to access one or the other course. Additionally, computer virus scares, recent national and international events, religious holy days and academic conferences keep interrupting normal course schedules. Thus, while more successful than the first attempt, fine-tuning is still needed to encourage more integration among the three sections of the course.

Another hitch has been that while WebCt© allows students to self-enroll in the class, the JMU courseware is controlled by central registration through PeopleSoft©. Thus, the computer center at JMU had to create "dummy" students and enroll them into BlackBoard©. This created a time lag the first week or two as course registrations were still unstable, JMU was waiting for AUM students and the JMU computer center was backlogged with course requests, etc. It should be noted that classes did not start the same week on both campuses.

Once AUM students entered BlackBoard©, they needed to go to the "personal information" area and change their "dummy" e-mails to real addresses. Some students failed to do this causing frustration on the part of JMU students who tried to reach out and the mail kept "bouncing back." On the AUM side, the courseware has internal e-mail that requires the JMU students to enter WebCT© to check for messages. Since JMU courseware has e-mail that goes out to the student's regular mailbox, JMU students continually forget to check AUM for their messages. Thus, the ideal communication the instructors envisioned gets bogged down by the reality of student's desire and ability to remember and/or to follow directions.

The hoped for communications to create partnerships based on common interests

required instructor intervention including the AUM instructor speaking via cell phone to the students during JMU class time to pair students for unit topics. The problem may have been exacerbated by the reluctance of some students to enter into "virtual collaborative partnerships." Traditionally, teaching has been a relatively isolated profession in terms of teacher planning. Here, we have altered the model by insisting on collaboration. We have further muddied the waters by insisting that those collaborations have a distance learning component. There has been some level of student unhappiness at this requirement. Students are viewing the collaboration as a burden rather than an opportunity to share the workload. That was not the instructors' intent. In fact, part of the purpose of the joint project was to provide students with some peer support as they created their first instructional units. The instructors also believed that collaborating students would have less, not more, work to do as they shared the collection of materials, etc. that are needed to create an instructional resource unit. This will need to be revisited as we plan for the Fall 2002.

Conclusion:

The possibilities of web-enhanced or web-supported instruction in social studies methods' classes are seemingly endless. The storage and retrieval aspect which allows for later analysis is an especially valuable element. Students can respond to questions posed by instructors on web boards which are then stored. In opposition to the face-to-face classroom where teachers pose questions and students respond, few have the opportunity to go back and rethink answers. Additionally, instructors usually move through a certain amount of material and often fail to go back and "pick up" on errors in judgement or thought posed by students. Web-supported classrooms offer instructors ample time to review and reflect upon student response

after which they can post thoughtful and informative or instructive feedback. Despite the endless possibilities of web-supported instruction, we strongly suggest that important problems lie in the path of a smooth electronic experience for both teacher and student.

We are aware that some of our difficulties could be reduced by selecting a single distance learning platform, either BlackBoard©, WebCt© or an entirely different courseware package unfamiliar to both groups. However, the instructors agree that there are benefits to having pre-service teachers cope with the frustrations of multiple courseware platforms in the hope of teaching flexibility and transfer of technology skills. Student's thinking ability is increased when they have to figure out how each courseware works when having been assured that despite the names on the buttons, all the functions they need are there. One might recall that problem solving was one of the characteristics of effective learning. Some problems may never be solved. For example, the comfort level of students regarding ownership of the units they are creating. In this experiment, both groups experienced a high-level of anxiety owing to the nebulous electronic classroom where students only knew each other through e-mail and electronic postings, despite the fact that chat and draw rooms were available to them.

We hope to report in the future that the quality of student discussions, their awareness of multiple perspectives, and their respect for diversity of talent and learning styles has increased. We hope to report in the future that students look positively on the opportunity to form virtual partnerships and collaborations rather than see them as an additional burden. We can only complete this research as the students complete their projects and the instructors become ever more adept at refining course design.

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